

Preparing an Emergency-Ready Work Force

How to Create a Partnership between Your Public Health Agency and the Child Care Community

Initiate planning for child care in a public health emergency:

IDENTIFY NEEDS

A public health emergency can result from:

- a community crisis, such as severe weather or an outbreak of a contagious disease, or
- a declared disaster, such as extreme weather, bioterrorism, a major toxic chemical spill, or an airplane crash.

Public health emergency responders (critical service workers) include:

- first responders,
- health care professionals, and
- essential support personnel and volunteers.

The availability of many critical service workers depends on safe and secure child care. Public health emergencies—particularly those involving disease or biological agents—typically require a prolonged response. Thus, critical service workers with children should make plans for both short-term and long-term child care arrangements under emergency conditions.

Public health agencies should encourage and support this planning by employees and volunteers to prepare an emergency-ready work force.



IDENTIFY PARTNERS

Public health agencies should acknowledge critical service workers' long-term child care needs and explore the existing child care resources and systems unique to their community.

More specifically, each agency should partner with child care stakeholders to:

- define needs,
- understand challenges, and
- seek solutions.

Partners to include in the partnership are:

- the public health agency's emergency response planners,
- other employers in need of a ready emergency work force,
- employees identified as critical service workers,
- child care administrators,
- child care providers, and
- others who can support the process.

Child care partners should include local representatives of:

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- the child care resource and referral agency,
- the child care licensing agency, and
- family child care providers and licensed group programs.

Establish a multilevel approach to meeting the child care needs of critical service workers:

IDENTIFY SOLUTIONS

Level 1: Strengthen planning for long-term child care among individual families

- Encourage parents to contact the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) to identify local child care options:

Telephone contact:

1-800-424-2246 (English and Spanish. Other languages available via interpreter service.)

Website contact:

www.childcareaware.org

Support local hospital human resource departments in their efforts to promote family planning for long-term child care among their critical service workers.

- Distribute packets of emergency child care forms and materials and sample “child care ready” tote bags to the employers of potential critical service workers.

Level 2: Support emergency preparedness training for child care providers

- Develop an emergency preparedness training manual and “Train the Trainer” guide for family child care providers and licensed group providers.
- Provide repetitive trainings to address preparing for disasters and helping children cope until all providers have been trained.

Level 3: Utilize and strengthen existing systems for child care

- Engage current providers in developing a voluntary network of emergency child care providers.
- Recruit providers for this network through the emergency preparedness trainings and other venues within the community.
- Designate the local child care resource and referral center as the link between critical service workers and the voluntary emergency child care network.

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